

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief Ronal W. Serpas



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For Immediate Release

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4 Children Found With the Help of WSP

Chief Ronal Serpas announced today Child Protective Services recovered four children in Arizona on June 11, 2003, found through the investigation of detectives from the Missing and Exploited Children Task Force (MECTF) of the Washington State Patrol and the Peoria Police Department. The MECTF unit is part of the WSP Investigative Assistance Division and includes a full-time Detective on loan from the Lacey Police Department.

Captain Mark E. Couey, commander of the WSP Investigative Assistance Division, said, "The Peoria Police Department in Arizona played a significant role in this recovery. They were notified through Project ALERT, a new program initiated by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. This program utilizes the volunteer assistance of retired law enforcement officers, who are activated to do surveillance and other activities necessary to track down leads received from other states."

The case was initiated on May 5, 2003, at the request of a caseworker from CPS, and the MECTF was formally requested to recover the children through a court order coordinated through the Attorney General's Office. All four children, deemed wards of the state, had allegedly been taken by their biological mother (all four children) and father (two of the children).

"The MECTF unit is made up of very dedicated people who are making a difference every day in their efforts to recover missing and exploited children," stated Chief Serpas.

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